

Remarks

Claims 1, 3-9, 11-17, and 19-21 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 3, 4, 9, 11, 16, and 21 were previously amended. Claims 2, 10, and 18 were previously cancelled. Claims 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 15, 16, 19, and 21 are presently amended. Claims 6, 12, and 13 are canceled herein. The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3-5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,965,994 to Brownell (hereinafter "Brownell"), and further in view of U.S. Patent Publ. No. 2004/0006700 to Freeman (hereinafter "Freeman"). Claims 6, 7, 13, and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants submit that the amendments after Final Rejection comply with requirements of form expressly set forth in the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants are entitled to entry of these Amendments as a matter of right under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 (b)(1).

A. Remarks Regarding Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action provides that claims 6, 7, 13, and 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Office Action at 7. The current amendments incorporate the allowable limitations of claim 6 into independent claims 1, 16, and 21, canceling claim 6. The current amendments also incorporate the allowable limitations of claim 13 into independent claim 9, canceling claim 13. To provide indefinite/definite article agreement, these amendments necessitate amendments in dependent claims 3, 7, 11, 15, and 19, and cancellation of claim 12. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11, 14-17, and 19-21, each containing

allowable limitations of claims 6 or 13, are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

B. Remarks Regarding Rejection of Claims 1, 3-5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 19-21 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Independent claims 1, 9, 16, and 21, and those depending therefrom, have been amended to recite features previously presented in claims 6 and 13, which would be in condition for allowance if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, the rejections with respect to claim 1, 3-5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 19-21 are believed to be obviated.

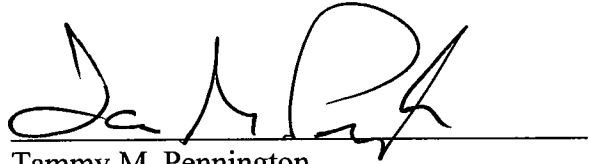
C. No Waiver

All of Applicants' arguments and amendments are without prejudice or disclaimer. Additionally, Applicants have merely discussed example distinctions from the cited references. Other distinctions may exist, and Applicants reserve the right to discuss these additional distinctions in a later Response or on Appeal, if appropriate. By not responding to additional statements made by examiner, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Examiner's additional statements, such as, for example, any statements relating to what would be obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. The example distinctions discussed by Applicants are sufficient to overcome the anticipation rejections. The current amendments to the claims are sufficient to overcome the novelty and obviousness rejections.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11, 14-17, and 19-21 of the present invention, as amended, are allowable. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of the pending claims be withdrawn and that these claims be passed to issuance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tammy M. Pennington', is written over a horizontal line.

Tammy M. Pennington
Registration No. 61,223

Baker Botts L.L.P.
910 Louisiana
One Shell Plaza
Houston, Texas 77002-4995
(713) 229-1972

Baker Botts Docket Number: 016295.1579

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